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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001807

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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: GULF BETWEEN AFRICAN AND ARAB TRIBES IN DARFUR
WIDENING

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) During his November 13-14 visit to El Fasher, Darfur, both African and Arab tribal representatives told CDA Fernandez that they have historical grievances that are not being addresses adequately by the UN/AU peace process. Both groups feel marginalized by the process and believe that neither the insurgents nor the Government represent their views. Both view themselves as victims having inferior access to services and expressed frustration with the government. More ominously, despite their common grievances, both groups expressed a sense of desperation and a recognition of the widening gulf between them, which will complicate any efforts at reconciliation. End summary.

Arab Tribes: "Driven into the hands of the Janjaweed"

12. (C) CDA met November 13 with the leaders of the four major Abbala Arab tribes in Darfur: Mahamit, Mahariyya, Ireiqat, and Etafat. These are the tribes from where the majority of the notorious janjaweed militia have been drawn. They welcomed the hours that CDA spent with them noting that "Americans, and the international community in general, were rather late in wanting to listen to them." The Arab tribal leaders said they had been in and out of Darfur for the last 600 years as camel herders. They claimed that sixty percent of the population in greater Darfur is either Abbala (camel herding) or Baggara (cattle herding) Arab tribes (Note: The Fur also make a similar claim of accounting for sixty percent of the population of Darfur. No one knows for sure).

13. (C) The Arab representatives described a history or marginalization in Darfur, without land rights and without access to services such as education and health care, in part due to their nomadic lifestyle. They expressed frustration that a majority of their population continues without access to these services, even though many have settled with family members in El Fasher and other larger towns due to ongoing violence and insecurity outside of the towns and destruction of infrastructure in their traditional lands.

14. (C) The Arab tribal leaders freely acknowledged that many of their men had been recruited by the militias and government-sponsored security services. However they said that after the insurgency started, they had little choice but to arm themselves and had been driven into the hands of the government security services to protect themselves from attacks by the insurgents, especially the Zaghawa who often raided and stole their camels. They said many of their men

had been recruited into the government sponsored camel police and border intelligence units. Moreover, once their seasonal infrastructure such as wells had been destroyed by the insurgents, and their camels had been stolen, there was nothing to go back to and they had been forced to settle in the towns.

15. (C) The Arab leaders complained of a lack of representation at the peace talks in Arusha and at Sirte. Since the talks were primarily between the insurgents and the government, the Arab tribes did not have a voice. The Arab leaders complained that neither the international community nor the Government is consulting with them at all in advance of the peace talks. They also complained that international NGOs and the UN are discriminating against them when hiring for jobs, partly due to the lack of education among their people, misplaced solidarity with African IDPs, and showing a preference for leasing property from Fur rather than Arab landlords and landowners. They also expressed deep concern that they continue to be targeted by insurgent groups even now that they have been forced to resettle in towns, and that their men see no alternative to recruitment into government-sponsored security services. They complained that the international community listens too much to IDPs, many of whom are not actually displaced. One noted driving through the Jebel Si (majority Fur) area and said that there was no reason these people could not return home.

16. (C) CDA replied that the depredations caused only last month by a pro-government Arab militia (the Maaliya in South Darfur) in Al-Muhajeria showed that IDPs have good reasons to seek security before returning. He noted that the U.S. is not opposed to the Arab tribes of Darfur and sees them as part of the future of the region but peace will not come to Darfur

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until IDPs return home in safety and dignity to the property from which they were driven. Neither UNAMID nor the international community were anti-Arab but the tribes should be careful that they are not made scapegoats for actions ordered by the government in Khartoum. He welcomed continued dialogue and look forward to visiting them in their encampments. The tribal leaders asked for a more balanced U.S. position and for U.S. development assistance for roads, schools, hospitals and water. CDA noted that development can only come when there is peace in Darfur and refugees and displaced persons return.

Fur: Marginalized in the IDP Camps

17. (C) CDA met November 14 with the Fur senior Sheikh from the Abu Shouk IDP camp, Abu Bashir Ali Ahmed, and the native administration king of the Fur in El Fasher, Rahamtalla Mahmoud. Both were grateful for the support of the United States in helping their people and contrasted it with the indifference of their fellow Muslims from Arab countries. The concerns of the Fur leaders were surprisingly similar to those expressed by the Arab leaders. They complained that their people do not have adequate access to education and other services in the IDP camps, and that the UN/AU peace process does not take their views into account. They both said that SLA leader Abdelwahid Nur represents their views, since the Government does not respect peace agreements, including the now unraveling CPA, and therefore the Fur must receive guarantees before attending talks. They complained that neither the government nor the international community listens to them, and lamented that the only way to be heard is to join the rebel movements in order to gain seats at the negotiating table. They said they will never trust the government because the government has killed so many of their people. They expressed great hope for the UNAMID mission, because the AMIS mission has not been able to protect them, even in the camps. The Fur Shiekh from the IDP camp said that the IDPs receive information from satellite TV in the

camps, rather than relying on radio. US-owned Al-Hurra is popular followed by the less trustworthy Al-Jazeera but no Sudanese media outlet is taken seriously.

Comment

18. (C) Our discussions with the Arab and Fur groups show deep divisions based on historical grievances, but also revealed new grievances based on their own views of the current landscape in Darfur. Both groups see themselves as victims, increasingly marginalized and discriminated against, unheard by the international community and their own government. The Arabs see themselves as marginalized emigrants on the margins of larger towns in Darfur, discriminated against by the social structures in these towns, isolated from their land, and without a voice in the peace process. Ominously, they see themselves as having no option but to arm themselves and join the government-sponsored camel police and border units. Meanwhile the Fur see themselves as isolated in camps, removed not only from major towns but also from their own lands. They are frustrated by the international community's focus on armed insurgents at the peace talks, without any representation from IDPs, and see that their only recourse may be to take up arms. Their virtual blind support for SLM leader Abdelwahid al Nur is linked to his repeated calls for the two issues that are most meaningful to them: disarmament of the Arab security services and compensation for the displaced Fur tribes. While they share a common heritage and many similar complaints, the widening gap between Arabs and Fur in Darfur will make reconciliation attempts difficult as both see Darfur's reality as a zero-sum game.
FERNANDEZ